

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-05 IO-13 DHA-02 OMB-01

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ORM-02 /095 W

-----051338 042583 /46

P R 051244Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2057

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1489

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR SY LE

SUBJECT: MARCH 2-4 PRESS COLUMNS FOCUS ON SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. RECENT PRESS COLUMNS HAVE RESURFACED SYRIAN CONCERN WITH DISORDER IN SOUTH LEBANON. AL-THAWRAH COLUMNIST ASSERTED THAT, JUST WHEN TENSIONS HAD BEGUN TO EASE, "SOME GUNMEN GATHERED IN SOUTH LEBANON TO DISRUPT ADF MISSION AND ISRAEL INITIATED ITS HOSTILE PROVOCATIONS ALONG LENGTH OF BORDER, TO GIVE WORLD ILLUSION THAT WAR HAS NOT YET ENDED IN LEBANON. ISRAEL COUPLED  
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WITH THIS FEVERISH ACTIVITY A POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN TO SEPARATE SOUTH LEBANON FROM HOMELAND, CHARGING THAT ADF NOT ENTITLED TO BE PRESENT IN AREA AND SHOULD BE REPLACED BY INTERNATIONAL FORCES. OBSERVER PROBING THIS ISUTATION WILL DISCOVER THAT FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON CAN ONLY SERVE INTEREST OF ZIONIST ENEMY AND ITS EXPANSIONIST AMBITIONS. THESE

INCIDENTS SHOULD BE CONTAINED AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME. ISSUE IS PURELY ARAB QUESTION, AND IT IS ADF,, NOT INTERNATIONAL FORCES AS DEMANDED BY ISRAEL, WHICH ARE ENTITLED TO BE PRESENT IN SOUTH LEBANON." COLUMNIST THEN CALLED UPON "FORCES WHICH HAVE MADE SOUTH LEBANON STAGE FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS TO ABIDE BY CEASEFIRE RESOLUTIONS AND ADHERE TO SECURITY PLAN ADF IMPLEMENTING." HE CONCLUDED THAT, "IF SOME LEBANESE UNDER ILLUSION THAT SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON HAS SLIPPED FROM HANDS OF STATE, THIS ILLUSION WILL SWIFTLY DISAPPEAR IN FACE OF ADF PINCERS.Z

2. TWO PAPERS FRONT-PAGED TEXT OF MARCH 1 AL-ANWAR EDITORIAL BY RAFIQ KHURI.ENTITLED "ASAD DOCTRINE BETWEEN LEBANON AND SUDAN," EDITORIAL PRAISED DECISION TAKEN BY PRES. ASAD TO PREVENT PARTITION AND BALKANIZATION OF LEBANON. WRITER CLAIMED ASAD HAD RESTORED ARAB SOLIDARITY IN LEBANON AND HAD CONSEQUENTLY REFOCUSED ATTENTION ON NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. HE CONCLUDED THAT, "WAR NEEDS MONEY; SETTLEMENT NEEDS MONEY; ARAB SOLIDARITY NEEDS MONEY; LEBANON NEEDS MONEY; AND UNITY OF POOR NEEDS MONEY. EITHER WE STICK TOGETHER, OR WE FALL TOGETHER."

3. REPORT IN AL-THAWRAH NOTED OBSTACLES THAT HAVE PREVENTED QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE FROM DISCHARGING ITS DUTIES: A) COMMITTEE CANNOT EXCEED ITS STIPULATED UNCLASSIFIED

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BOUNDS WHEN TACKLING PENDING ISSUES OF POLICY AND SECURITY, B) SOME POLITICAL GROUPS IN LEBANON STILL REFUSE TO DEAL WITH COMMITTEE IN POSITIVE MANNER, C) "NEW POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE ARISEN IN LEBANON DIRECTLY REFLECT ON ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEE," AND D) "MAIN OBSTACLE PREVENTING COMMITTEE FROM DISCHARGING ITS TASK IS PRESENCE OF FOREIGN FORCES ON LEBANESE SCENE CONSTANTLY TRYING TO INFLAME GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AND TO CARRY OUT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AND PROVOCATIVE ACTS." REPORT CONCLUDED ON OPTIMISTIC NOTE THAT, "SOONER OR LATER, COMMITTEE WILL BE ABLE TO EXECUTE ALL ASSIGNED POLITICAL AND MILITARY TASKS, SINCE CAUSES PREVENTING IT FROM DOING SO WILL DEFINITELY BE ELIMINATED. MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009